

Gorges State Park Summary

Gorges State Park is located in the West District in Transylvania County.

Gorges State Park Visitors

In 2004, there were 134,072 visitors to Gorges State Park. Of those, 8 percent (10,493) were from Transylvania County (locals); 45 percent (60,624) were primary purpose, non-local visitors (visitors residing outside of Transylvania County that are in the area for the primary purpose of visiting the park); and 47 percent (62,956) were casual use, non-local visitors (visitors residing outside of Transylvania County that are in the area for reasons other than visiting the park) (Figure 21).

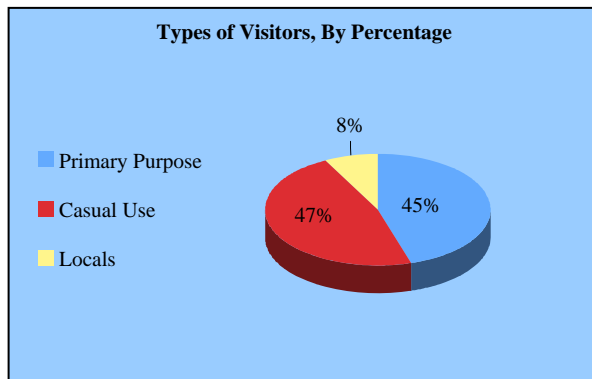


Figure 21. Gorges - Types of Visitors

Visitors typically enjoy hiking, picnicking, and backpack camping (Figure 22).

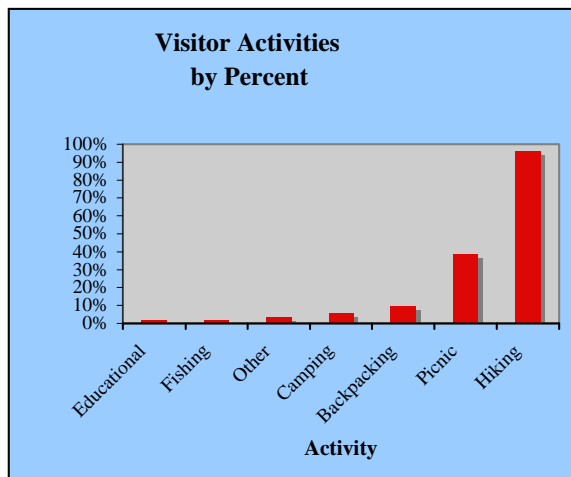


Figure 22. Gorges - Visitor Activities

Visitor Expenditures

Those individuals who reside outside of Transylvania County and visit the park create economic impact by infusing the economy with outside dollars. Primary purpose, non-local visitors spent an estimated \$2,533,239 while visiting the region. A bulk of that amount was spent on dining out and lodging (Figure 23).

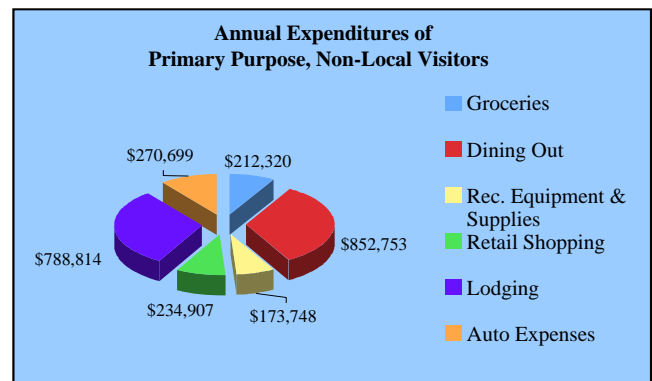


Figure 23. Gorges - Annual Expenditures of Primary Purpose, Non-Local Visitors

Economic Impact

Non-local park visitors that are primarily in the area to visit Gorges are especially important to the local economy. They bring and spend dollars from outside Transylvania County that would not otherwise enter and impact the local economy. The direct expenditures made by these visitors, as well as the subsequent indirect and induced expenditures that follow as a result of their spending, have been measured to determine their impact on local sales, personal income, and employment.

Economic Impact of Gorges State Park

Impact on Sales

The impact on sales from the direct expenditures of primary purpose, non-local visitors totaled an estimated \$3,366,964. Most of this impact occurred in the form of spending for dining out, lodging, and auto expenses (Figure 24).

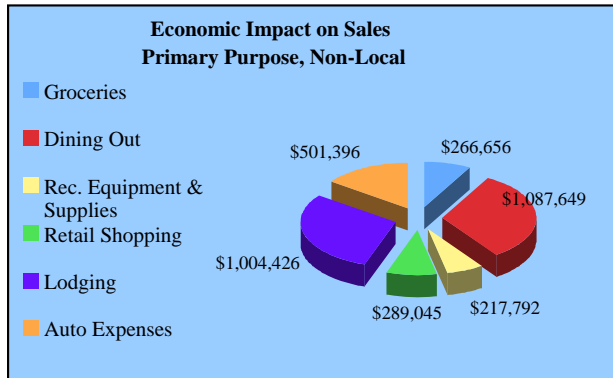


Figure 24. Gorges - Economic Impact on Sales, Primary Purpose, Non-Local Visitors

Impact on Personal Income

The impact on personal income from the direct expenditures of primary purpose, non-local visitors totaled an estimated \$1,215,657 (Figure 25). This is a measure of the economic benefit that local residents derive from expenditures made by non-local park visitors.

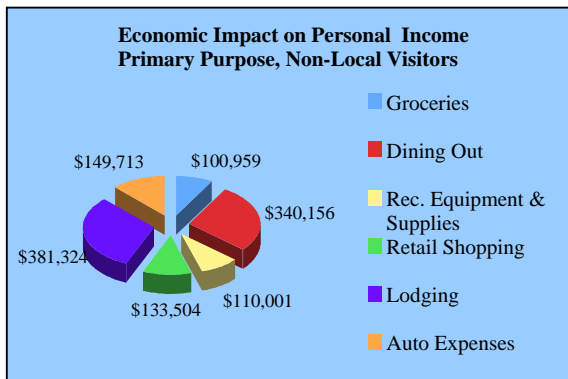


Figure 25. Gorges - Economic Impact on Personal Income, Primary Purpose, Non-Local Visitors

Impact on Employment

The impact on employment from the direct expenditures of primary purpose, non-local visitors

totaled an estimated 64 full-time equivalent jobs in Transylvania County (Figure 26).

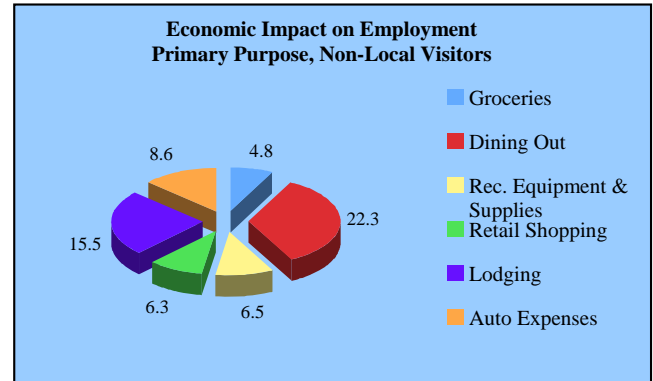


Figure 26. Gorges - Economic Impact on Employment, Primary Purpose, Non-Local Visitors

Overall Impacts

The economic impact of the park's operating budget also has a role to play in the overall economic impact of the park. During the period of data collection, the park's operating budget was \$253,509. Table 8 provides a summary of the overall economic impact of the park on sales, personal income, and employment.

Table 8 Gorges - Economic Impacts of Operating Budget and Overall Economic Impacts

Impact Category	State Operating Budget	Overall Impacts
Sales	\$351,784	\$3,718,748
Personal Income	\$242,800	\$1,458,457
Employment	7.0	71

How the State's Investment Benefits Transylvania County

The state's operating budget for Gorges State Park signifies an investment. Part of the return on this investment is the economic impact created when visitors choose Gorges for their recreation. A measure of that return is in the "leverage ratio," or the number of dollars generated for local residents for every dollar invested by the state in net operating costs. For Gorges State Park, that ratio is 1:5.8. Therefore, local residents receive a benefit of \$5.80 for every dollar the state invests.